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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in the Washington Community and Technical College system on the quality of telecourses, current telecourse offerings, and plans for the use of telecourses. Where appropriate, findings for 1990-91 were compared with 1988-89 data. Study findings included the following: (1) the unduplicated headcount for telecourse enrollment in 1990-91 was 5,204, a 64% increase from the 3,178 enrollees in 1988-89; (2) 50% of telecourse students worked full-time and 38% were parents; (3) the median age of telecourse students dropped from 30 years in 1988-89 to 26 years in 1990-91; (4) in 1990-91, 17 (out of 19) community colleges offered telecourses to a total of 706 full time equivalent (FTE) students, an increase of 92% over the 367 FTE's in 1988-89; (5) all growth in telecourse FTE's since 1988-89 has been in academic subjects, with vocational subject areas showing a decline for the past 3 years; (6) there were no FTE's in basic skills telecourses in either 1988-89 or 1990-91; (7) more than 400 telecourses were offered in 1990-91, with half the courses in the social sciences, and one quarter in the natural sciences; (8) classes with 30 or more students grew from 12% to 17% of the total number of classes between 1988-89 and 1990-91; (9) in comparison with 1988-89 enrollees, 1990-91 students were more likely to be younger, female, white, working, and parents; (10) telecourse students were nearly twice as likely as other students to be preparing for transfer; and (11) there were an average of 27.3 student FTE's per FTE faculty in telecourses from 1988-89 through 1990-91. Data tables are included. (PAA)

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Operations Report
No. 91-5

ED339439

VIDEO TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

An Update of the Course Offerings for Academic Year 1989-90 and 1990-91

November 1991

Loretta Seppanen

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BACKGROUND

In June 1990, the State Board for Community and Technical College prepared a report on the quality of telecourses, current telecourse offerings, and plans for the use of telecourses, entitled "Video Telecommunications in Washington Community Colleges." This report updates information on the telecourse offerings orginally described in the June 1990 study.

Highlights: Changes Since the 1988-89 Study

Telecourse enrollments have grown substantially:

* The unduplicated headcount in telecourses increased 64 percent from 1988-89 to 1990-91 from 3,178 to 5,204. Full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) increased 92 percent during the same period from 367 FTE to 706 FTE.

* The majority of telecourse students continued to be "timebound and placebound" because they cannot enroll in regularly scheduled college classes. Fifty percent of the telecourse students worked full-time and 38 percent were parents.

* Growth in telecourses, however, has been primarily among younger students not likely to be timebound or placebound. The median age of telecourse students dropped from 30 in 1988-89 to 26 in 1990-91.

More colleges offer telecourses:

* In 1989, of the 16 colleges offering telecourses, 12 said they planned to expand their telecourse offerings, two planned to stay the same and two were uncertain. Fifteen colleges did expand their offerings. One college discontinued offerings and one failed to enroll enough students to offer any telecourses in 1990-91, but offered telecourses in 1991-92.

* Three colleges that had not previously offered telecourses began doing so over the past two years: Edmonds, Shoreline and Whatcom.

Growth has been in academic courses:

* In 1988-89, despite the fact that most students were working, only ten percent of the FTEs enrolled in telecourses were in vocational courses. By 1990-91, vocational FTEs only constituted eight percent of telecourse enrollment.

TELECOURSES ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Student and FTE Growth

In 1990-91, 17 community colleges offered telecourses to a total of 706 FTEs, an increase of 92 percent over the 367 FTEs enrolled in 1988-89. Both the number of colleges offering courses and the average enrollment per college has grown. For detail, see Table A-I in the Appendix.

The number of headcount students enrolled in telecourses increased by 64 percent since 1988-89. In 1990-91, 5,204 students were enrolled in telecourses. Nearly 1,300 enrolled in more than one telecourse (Figure 1).

Growth in Academic Courses

All growth in telecourse FTEs since 1988-89 has been in academic subjects (Figure 2). The number of FTEs offered in vocational subject areas declined significantly over three years of the study. There were no FTEs in basic skills courses in 1989-90 and 1990-91.

By comparison, growth in conventional courses has been primarily in the basic skills and developmental studies areas (courses below the college level).

FIGURE 1
TELECOURSE ENROLLMENTS
UNDUPLICATED HEADCOUNT COMPARED TO ENROLLMENTS

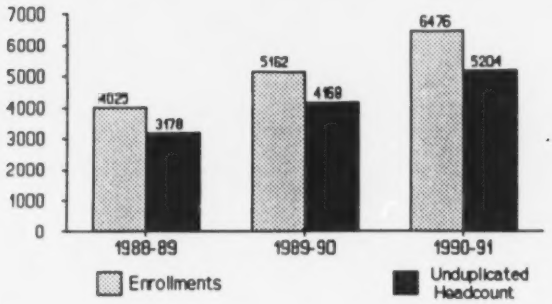
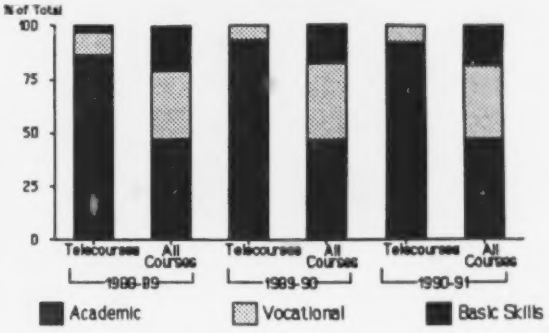


FIGURE 2
FTES IN TELECOURSES
COMPARED TO FTES IN ALL COURSES
BY SUBJECT



More than 400 telecourses were offered in 1990-91.

Half of all telecourse FTEs were in the social sciences and a quarter in natural sciences in both 1989-90 and 1990-91.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF COURSES AND FTES BY SUBJECT AREA

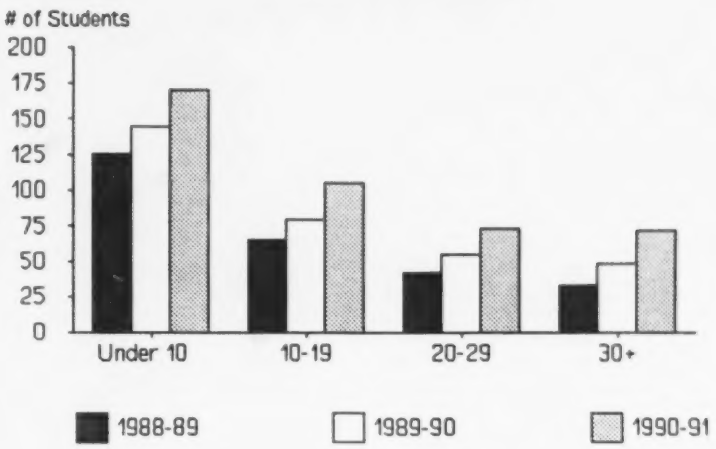
	1989-90			1990-91		
CIP Group	Number of Courses	FTEs	% of Total	Number of Courses	FTEs	% of Total
Business & Accounting	29	45	8.5%	54	71	10.0%
Economics	21	15	2.8%	19	18	2.5%
History	30	57	10.8%	38	84	11.9%
English	34	56	10.6%	39	61	8.6%
Psychology	40	102	19.1%	56	135	19.2
Anthropology	32	68	12.8%	46	94	13.3%
Other Social Sciences	16	19	3.7%	14	23	3.2%
Interdisciplinary	7	11	2.0%	6	19	2.7%
Natural Sciences	82	133	25.1%	93	166	23.5%
Other	36	24	4.6%	54	35	5.0%
System Totals	327	531		419	706	

TELECOURSE SIZE AND INSTRUCTION

Telecourses have grown in size since 1988-89. In 1990-91, classes with less than 10 students comprised 41 percent of the total compared to 47 percent in 1988-89.

Classes with 30 or more students grew from 12 percent to 17 percent of the total number of classes.

FIGURE 3
CLASS SIZE OF TELECOURSES



TELECOURSES STUDENTS

Student Characteristics

Compared to all other students, those enrolled in telecourses in 1990-91 were:

* younger (Table 2)
* more likely to be female (Figure 4)
* more likely to be white (Table 3)
* more likely to be parents (Figure 5)
* more likely to be working (Figure 6)
* more likely to come to the college with some prior post-secondary experience (Figure 7)

Three years earlier the picture had been the same, except that in 1988-89 telecourse students were older than other students, on average.

TABLE 2
MEDIAN AGE OF STUDENTS
(1990-91)

Year	Telecourse Students	All Students
1988-89	30	28
1989-90	27	29
1990-91	26	29

FIGURE 4
GENDER OF STUDENTS (1990-91)

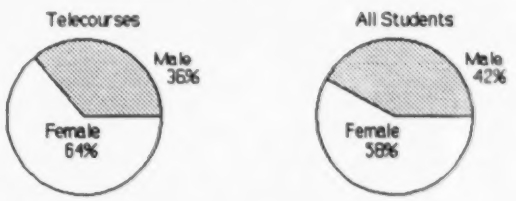


TABLE 3
ETHNIC BACKGROUND

	Telecourses		All Courses	
	1990-91	%	1990-91	%
White	4,756	91.0%	228,106	80.2%
Asian/Pacific	139	2.7%	19,232	6.8%
African American	111	2.1%	9,155	3.2%
Native American	86	1.6%	4,781	1.7%
Hispanic	82	1.6%	13,538	4.8%
Other	52	1.0%	9,678	3.4%

FIGURE 5
FAMILY STATUS OF STUDENTS (FALL 1990)

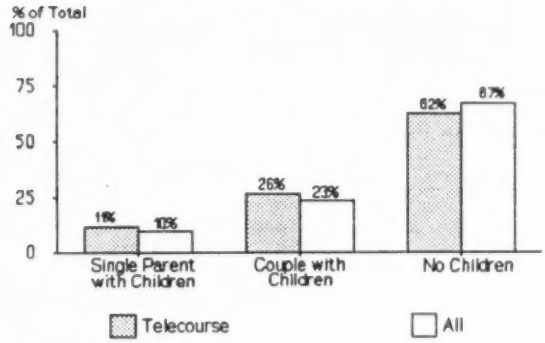


FIGURE 6
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF STUDENTS (FALL 1990)

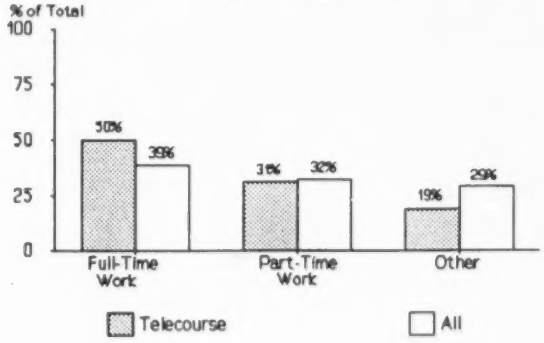
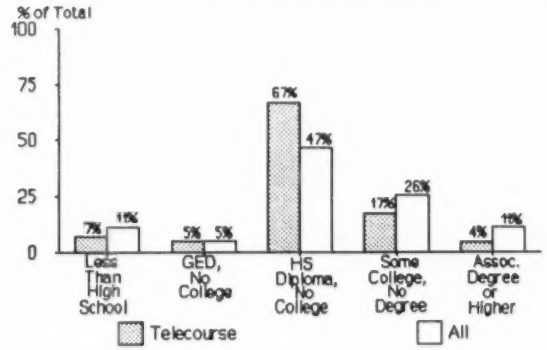


FIGURE 7
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF NEW STUDENTS (FALL 1990)



Telecourse Students'Expectations

The majority of new telecourse students were preparing for a degree or planned to be at the college for more than a year. They planned to complete more education than other new students. Telecourse students were nearly twice as likely as other students to be preparing for transfer.

FIGURE 8
EDUCATIONAL PLAN OF NEW TELECOURSE STUDENTS COMPARED TO ALL NEW STUDENTS (FALL 1990)

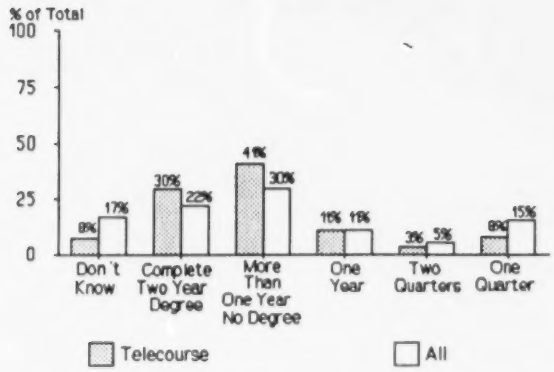
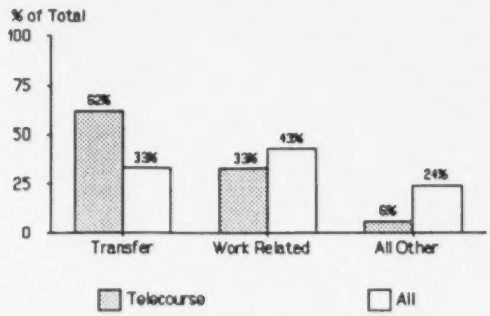


FIGURE 9
EDUCATIONAL GOAL OF TELECOURSE STUDENTS COMPARED TO ALL STUDENTS (FALL 1990)



TELECOURSE FACULTY

More than half of the telecourses offered were taught by full-time faculty.

There were an average of 27.3 student FTEs per FTE faculty in telecourses over the past three years. That ratio of students to faculty compares to 30.7 for all social science courses and 21.4 for natural sciences courses for the same time period. Since half the telecourses were in social sciences, the 27.3 ratio suggests that telecourses require about the same faculty effort per student as classroom-based courses.

TABLE 4
FACULTY EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN TELECOURSES
PERCENT OF TOTAL FTEF

	88-89	89-90	90-91
Full-Time	55%	54%	51%
Part-Time	29%	32%	38%
Volunteer/Other	16%	14%	11%

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SUMMARY

As predicted by colleges in the 1990 study, telecourse instruction has grown dramatically in the past three years, nearly doubling in size. Seventeen to eighteen colleges offer courses via television each year. While telecourses mainly serve "timebound and placebound" students, they also are serving more younger students unable to find space in regularly scheduled courses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Deralyn Gjertson of the SBCTC staff used the SMIS database to provide the descriptive information for this report. Because the database does not clearly identify telecourses, the initial phase of the research required that colleges offering telecourses provide the SBCTC with a report or disk file identifying such courses. The following community college staff assisted with that work:

Gary Mahn	Bellevue
Marla Kaut	Centralia
Sally Bowlin	Clark
Debra Meadows	Columbia Basin
Milt Stark	Edmonds
Gloria Hibbs	Grays Harbor
Mary Harding	Lower Columbia
Bonnie Gilligan	Pierce
Martha Blakely	Seattle Central
Barbara Fanger	Shoreline
Chris Anderson	Skagit Valley
Tom Woodnutt	South Puget Sound
John Howlett	Spokane District
Doug Whittaker	Tacoma
Nancy Kress	Walla Walla
Jan Hagen	Whatcom
Maria Sanchez	Yakima Valley

SBCTC staff assisting with the project were Jackie Eppler-Clark, Loretta Seppanen, and Robert Wark.

Appendix

Telecourses Data by College

TABLE A-I
TELECOURSE FTES BY FUNDING SOURCE

College	Annual FTEs 1988-89 State Funded	Contract/ Student Funded	Total FTEs	Annual FTEs 1989-90 State Funded	Contract Funded	Total FTEs	Annual FTEs 1990-91 State Funded	Contract Funded	Total FTEs
Grays Harbor	4.8	0.0	4.8	13.3	1.3	14.7	3.0	11.9	14.9
Skagit Valley	29.4	6.8	36.2	49.8	9.9	59.7	68.5	13.0	81.5
Seattle Central	13.4	9.8	23.2	18.2	0.0	18.2	5.3	33.7	39.1
Shoreline	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	0.0	5.7
Bellevue	0.0	*33.9	33.9	0.0	85.8	85.8	0.0	107.0	107.0
Highline	0.0	*3.8	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pierce	31.2	0.0	31.2	51.0	0.0	51.0	69.1	0.0	69.1
Centralia	2.3	8.6	10.9	36.9	2.6	39.5	31.8	8.1	39.9
Lower Columbia	13.8	0.0	13.8	7.6	0.0	7.6	14.8	0.6	15.4
Clark	23.1	0.0	23.1	36.4	4.6	40.9	25.5	7.2	32.6
Yakima Valley	24.9	0.0	24.9	26.0	1.2	27.2	25.3	0.7	26.0
Spokane	29.1	0.0	29.1	36.9	0.0	36.9	40.1	5.9	46.0
Spokane Falls	80.0	*9.2	89.2	62.8	24.6	87.3	86.9	5.1	92.0
Columbia Basin	26.2	0.0	26.2	37.4	0.0	37.4	21.4	54.7	76.7
Walla Walla	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Whatcom	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	14.4	17.6
Tacoma	2.8	2.6	5.4	8.3	2.6	10.8	12.8	0.0	12.8
Edmonds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.7	12.7	0.0	28.1	28.1
South Puget Sound	9.4	0.0	9.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
System Totals	291.9	74.7	366.6	385.9	145.2	531.0	415.2	290.5	706.2
% Change			--			44.8%			33.0%

* Student-funded effort reflected in total.

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